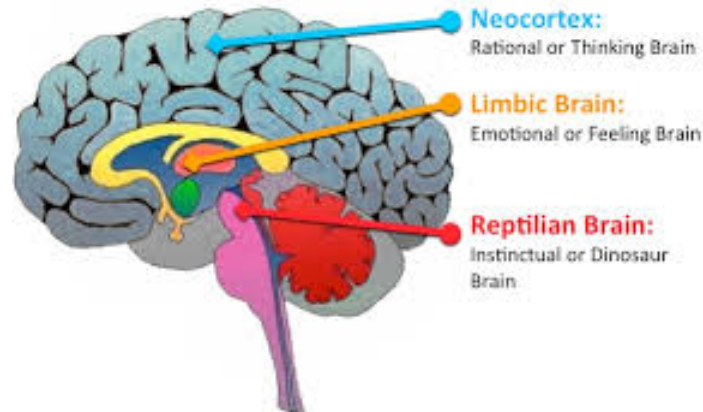


Building a Bridge from Ego to Essence with the Enneagram.

Session one

The Triune Brain Model



Neocortex: This is the newest part of the brain from an evolutionary standpoint. It is what makes us uniquely human. We use this part of the brain for analysis, thought, creativity, empathy, beliefs, clarity. It receives information from the Limbic or emotional brain and attempts to make sense of past through analysis. This part of the brain relies on the Mental Lens of perception.

Limbic Brain: We share this part of the brain with other mammals. It is where we store and process emotion, and memory. It is the location of our motivation & reward center,. This means that the emotional brain drives much of the motivation for our behavior and how we seek to get rewarded. Emotional reaction patterns are wired here by the time we are about 8 yrs. Some call this the “fear center”. This part of the brain relies on the Emotional lens of perception.

Somatic or Reptilian Brain: This part of the brain’s job is physical survival and homeostasis. Homeostasis is when the body maintains the functions such as breathing, heart rate, digestion, healing, etc. It is constantly monitoring and adjusting our biochemistry and other functions to keep us alive. It also senses into other people’s nervous systems to sense safety/danger. Instincts such as maintaining the body, social connection and sexual reproduction are part of this brain. Our defensive reflexes (Fight/Flight/Freeze) come from this part of the brain and happen in a split second below our level of awareness. Our drive for survival will always take priority. This is why we still feel fear or resort back to old patterns after profound shifts in our understanding. We access the somatic brain through the Felt Sense Lens of perception.

There is a connection and relationship with the 3 Centers of Intelligence in the Enneagram System:

Head or Mind Center: Looking for safety through Certainty. This can take the form of thinking, planning, research or trouble shooting. The mind stores our beliefs of who I need to be, and how world is. The mind uses the past to make sense of our now thus forming the lens that each Enneagram type views the world through. Our distorted lenses of perceptions, false beliefs and our habit of how we focus attention comes from this center. This center uses mental process to make sense of emotions, creating our “stories”. Intuitive information comes through insight and visions. Mental lens of perception. Head Types: 5, 6, and 7.

Heart Center: Looking for safety through connection, bonding and attunement, We all seek to find safety through other people’s social signals in the way of eye contact, a welcoming smile, a prosodic voice. This is called co-regulation. This is how babies learn to feel safety (or not) with primary caregivers. Emotional lens of perception can lead to seeking how to please, appease, fit in or be needed by others. Our vices and virtues are contained in the heart center. Intuitive information comes from a deep knowing in the heart and sensing into other people’s emotional states. Heart Types: 2, 3 and 4.

Gut/Body/Belly Center: This center directs us to look for safety through; Agency (ability to care for self,) autonomy, empowerment and belonging to our tribe. Our defense patterns come from the body center. This is connected to how we use our life force energy. Our primary energetic “power center” is below the naval. Self-preservation, social and sexual instincts come from this center. Along with the defense system, our abilities to set boundaries come from the belly. Intuitive information comes from a “gut feeling”. This could be connected to “neuroception” of the nervous system which can sense other people nervous system states. The Felt sense of awareness helps us to be present and is associated with this center. This center tends to be underdeveloped in most people in the Western culture. Body types: 8, 9, and 1.

Using somatic awareness and the 3 centers is a “bottom up approach” to transformation. “Top down approaches” includes psychotherapy or analysis, intellectual understanding and positive thinking or affirmations. This is assuming our “story” starts in the mind. However, much of our type structure or behavior and reactivity is triggered by our nervous system reflexes. This is happening below our awareness.

The bottom up approach works with relaxing the defensive reflexes. We can learn to become present to the roots of the arising of the patterns as we learn to move towards what we have avoided and retrain our focus of attention to include more and more of reality. We can change our story by changing our state (nervous system state).

Felt sense awareness, grounded presence and compassion helps us disconnect the story from the overwhelm that we originally experienced as young children. As adults we have the capacity to allow that overwhelm to complete itself.

How we adapted to the overwhelm becomes our identity; who we believed we had to be to survive or belong to a family or other social group. To come back to the essence of our being, as adults, we have to become more and more aware of our patterns, emotional reactivity and felt sense of the body. We can begin to experience ourself and life more fully as we learn to stay present to our actual experience as it is.

